A DIALOGUE

Between

Mr. *CANTERBURY*

A

Church of *England*-Man,

AND

Mr. *SCOTT*

A

DISSENTER.

To which is added

A Letter by Way of a Postscript,

Clearing the Objections against the CROSS in *Baptism*, and EPISCOPAL GOVERNMENT.

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DIALOGUE

To the moſt Moderate of the

DISSENTERS.

Dear Countrymen and Friends,

SOME of you, I believe, out of very good Deſign to ſave your own Souls, have deſerted our Church. And truly, if there had been any real ground for the mighty Noiſe that of late has been made againſt our Liturgy, *and* Church-Government, *I ſhould not have troubled you with this Dialogue: No reaſonable Man can blame you for avoiding Things which are really Superſtitious, or making your Salvation as ſafe as may be; but wiſe Men ſhould not eaſily be carried away with empty Words, which are only made uſe of by others to weaken the* Proteſtant Intereſt. *I have read over and over our Controverſie, and it is moſt certain that Lay-men can have no Concernment in it, but only when they receive the Sacrament of the Supper; were you commmanded to fall down upon your Knees at the Elevation of the Hoſt, according to the Practice of the Church of* Rome, *you might have Pretence to Charge us with Idolatry; but our Church declares againſt a Subſtantial Change in the Elements: If it is our Duty to pray to God on our Knees on ſtated*

Hours, how can it be criminal to give God the like Ceremony, when we are at the moſt ſolemn Ordinance in all Religion? I have in theſe Papers avoided Prolixity, and all Rhetorical and Affected Expreſſions, that you may in a little Time, and with Eaſe underſtand your Duty. If they will rectifie your Miſtakes, which (though I believe contrary to your Deſigns) are very deſtructive to the Happineſs of the Church, the Peace of the Nation, and the Glory of God, I ſhall be fully ſatisfied; and that little Time that you will ſpend in the reading of them, will be to very good Purpoſe.

You muſt own that Diviſions are very warmly ſpoke againſt in the New Teſtament, which Conſideration may juſtifie me for Writing, and oblige you to underſtand perfectly what Grounds you have to ſeparate from our Eſtabliſh'd Church.

A DIALOGUE

Between

Mr. *CANTERBURY*

AND

Mr. *SCOTT.*

Mr. *Cant.* NEW Neighbour, you are extreamly welcome to our Parts; I propoſe a World of Happineſs to my ſelf by our mutual Friendſhip.

Mr. *Scott.* I thank you, Sir, for your kind Wiſhes; I confeſs, I have ſufficiently taſted of your generous Diſpoſition while we ſtay'd together under the Tuition of that good Man Mr. *B.* a Perſon of primitive Simplicity and Holineſs.

Cant. I love to ſpeak as favourably as I can of the Dead: if we make ſome allowances for the time in which he lived, he was a very good ſort of Man. But pray walk to this Room, that we may be out of all Diſturbance.

Scott. I ſhall be directed by you; you are extreamly neat in your Houſe: pray whoſe Picture is that that lies in the middle? methinks, Courage and Parts may be read in that Face; upon my Word, it promiſes well.

Cant. You are not at all miſtaken in your Conjectures: but the Effigies is nothing to the Original; it is the Picture of the Good, but Unhappy, Archbiſhop *LAUD.*

Scott. Strange! how we Mortals are deceived? and is it ſo? let us talk no more of him; it had been well for *England* if he had been a Man of ſuch moderate, and peaceable Principles as our old Maſter *B.*

Cant. I do not love to make Compariſons, and eſpecially between great and ordinary Perſons; and yet I cannot believe that any *Engliſh* Man ever intended nobler Projects for the Benefit of Religion, the Reputation and Honour of the Church, than that unfortunate Gentleman: Men may make other Pretences, but after all, nothing but his great Diligence and Care for a competent Maintenance for the Inferiour Clergy, and his unwearied Zeal for Order and Unity in the Church, brought him to the Block.

Scott. Certainly, Sir, you are widely miſtaken about the Biſhop.

Cant. Not at all; and if you did but impartially peruſe his own excellent Apology, publiſhed by Mr. *Wharton*, you would quickly have a juſt Indignation againſt thoſe Men who robbed him of his Life and Reputation too.

Scott. He was certainly a very violent and furious Man againſt the Godly, who had more Religion in them, than to ſubmit to his Fancies and ſuperſtitious Inventions; and to our Miſery, he has left too many Sons like himſelf, who are the Troublers of *Iſrael*: if their Wings be not clipt, this Nation will never be happy.

Cant. I find our conformable Clergy are out of your Books; I muſt declare, that I cannot ſubſcribe to the Judgment you paſs

paſs on our Clergy: for as far as I can obſerve, they are quiet and peaceable Men; Perſons of Loyalty, Learning, and good Temper; and they have with great Succeſs vanquiſhed the Champions of *Rome*, and are not in the leaſt afraid to encounter the *Goliah's* of *Geneva*, who with equal Zeal, contrive the Ruine of our Church: I ſpeak to a wiſe Man; is it not an odd Courſe to form a Character of any Man, from the Account only given him by his Enemies? you may lay down this for a Maxim, that they are generally miſtaken, who ground all their Cenſures upon the Libels of a contrary Faction, and the Authority of profeſſed Adverſaries: if theſe Men you talk of, have been guilty of ſome Faults, (for none are altogether perfect in this World) where is the Prudence, Honeſty, or Virtue in making Satyrs againſt them in all Company? Religion ſuffers by our Reflections upon the Men of the ſacred Profeſſion, and ſo Atheiſm and Profaneneſs get Ground, and Wickedneſs thrives and proſpers: believe me, if we do not reverence the Miniſters of the Goſpel, and maintain their Authority, Chriſtianity will be miſerably expoſed to the wanton Humours of Infidels and profane Wits.

Scott. Pray avoid all Heats and Paſſion; Moderation is a thing that I love with all my Soul, yea, I could pawn all that is dear unto me, only to eſtabliſh that excellent Temper, throughout the Nation.

Cant. Very good Sir, but are you for a Diſh of Tea this Morning? it is what I love.

Scott. With all my heart, 'tis a very innocent thing, and I am better pleas'd with it, becauſe it does not ferment my Blood and make me hot, I am always for moderate things, as Diet, Recreation, and a moderate Clergy too.

Cant. And why not for a very moderate and ſlender Encouragement to the Gentlemen in Black? and upon very good Reaſons too, becauſe the Men of that Profeſſion are not to

mind earthly things, but are to expect a Reward in the other World.

Scott. You miſtake my meaning upon my word, I was only about to tell you, that I am extremely ſorry, that moſt of the Conformable Clergy are ſo ſtiff and ceremonious at this time of day, the generality of them, I will not ſay all, do conſtantly uſe the Croſs in Baptiſm, read every Tittle in the Book of Common Prayer, wear the Surplice, even upon Holidays, yea, and to a Man's Aſtoniſhment, deliver Sermons for the Lawfulneſs and Decency of theſe Things.

Cant. A Thing not to be ſuffered at this Juncture of Affairs; they cannot certainly be guilty of ſuch a high Charge. What, will they ſtill ſhew their Teeth againſt the ſober Party? will they never be reconciled to the good old Cauſe? they muſt be Men of great Mettle, who dare ſpeak openly againſt Diviſions, or deliver Speeches in Defence of the Church of *England*, as by Law eſtabliſhed. I wonder at their Courage for my part, that I do.

Scott. You may wonder, but ſo it is; for I cannot find that the generality of your Church-men are at all diſpoſed to part with their Popiſh Fopperies, or to expreſs any Willingneſs, that Orthodox Miniſters ſhould have fuller Liberty to exerciſe their Gifts. Your *Tantivies* and *Cathedraliſts* cry up the Common Prayer Book, as the Brethren of the Trade did the great *Diana* of the *Epheſians:* and after all, 'tis but a Relick of Popery, and they who uſe it, have not the Spirit which makes our Addreſſes acceptable to God.

Cant. What greater Liberty would you have for them? what, you would have our Miniſters turned out of their Livings to make way for your gifted Teachers? Look you, Sir, I have great Charity for you, and ſome of your Party; but you ſpeak the very Senſe of an Atheiſt, when you reproach all our Miniſters at that high rate, as if Gain was their Godlineſs, and all their Zeal proceeded only from temporal Intereſt.

tereſt. Believe me, your inconſiderate Cenſure warms my Blood, and forces me to declare to you, that you have quite forgot your beloved Moderation. What did not Famous *Cranmer*, *Latymer* and *Ridley* pray with the Spirit do you think, when they have made uſe of this very Book in all their publick Devotions? was it Humour, or the Spirit of God that induc'd our Reformers to compile it, and to proteſt againſt the Innovations of *Rome*? had they the Spirit or not, when they gave their Bodies to be burnt for the primitive Faith? By vilifying the Common Prayer Book, we kick the Aſhes of our pious Reformers, and do greatly leſſen their Reputation and Excellency. A devout Liturgy, as ours is, ſtints no Spirit that I know of, unleſs the Spirit of Rancour, Faction, Treaſon and Rebellion: And 'tis too well known how the Lords Anointed in the late times of Confuſion, was abuſed by the free Exerciſe of ſome Mens Parts in their unſanctified Devotions. I remember to have read ſomewhere of one who drew an Argument for the Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion, from the remarkable Hatred that the Monſter *Nero* bore to it, the Application is very eaſie: For the *Antitrinitarians*, *Quakers*, *Anabaptiſts*, *Independants*, ay, and the *Presbiterians*, who are more ſpruce, neat and rational, than other Separiſts, do with one Conſent conſpire the Deſtruction of our Publick Liturgy, and it is well known that to re-eſtabliſh Popery in *England*, Queen *Mary* at her firſt coming to the Crown, repealed all the Acts of Parliament which were made in favour of the Common Prayer Book.

Scott. Indeed you tell me ſome News which I never heard of before in all my Life.

Cant. It may be ſo, for Men of your Principles are as much led on by an implicite Faith, as the moſt bigotted *Papiſts* in the World; you ſeldom read any Controverſial Book that relates to our unhappy Diſputes, but what ſeems to favour your own Tenets; and if I am rightly informed, you

you are wholly guided by the Judgment of your Paſtors in the Choice of your Books; if that be the way of it, we can give a very good Reaſon for your obſtinate Averſion to our excellent Conſtitution. Your Rabbies, I muſt tell you, are ſo wiſe as to think that the Biſhop of *Worceſter's Unreaſonableneſs of Separation*, and Dr. *Puller's* Book of the *Moderation of the Church of* England, would put you to a Nonplus, if carefully read, and then the Goodneſs of our own Cauſe and the Weakneſs of yours, would quickly appear.

Scott. Indeed I blame my ſelf for not reading both Sides; but may be your Churchmens Books are like their Preaching, not at all for Edification.

Cint. I muſt take notice of your great Reflection upon the Learning and Judgment of our Epiſcopal Divines; and to retort upon you, I am fully perſwaded, that there are ſome among you cried up for Men of extraordinary Gifts, and from whom a wonderful Edification is conſtantly received, that are no more fit to be Teachers and Governors in Religion (as one expreſſes it) than Mountebanks to compoſe Diſpenſatories, or to be Preſidents of Colleges of Phyſicians: nor is it any great Wonder, when any Man that has but Confidence, may preach in ſome of your Congregations. Ordination by Impoſition of Hands, attended with Prayer and Faſting (though it be a Ceremony of Divine Inſtitution) is in a manner wholly laid aſide by you; yes, and I find Books too written againſt the Neceſſity of it: ſo that if your Miniſters be Men of Ability and Learning (as doubtleſs ſome of them are) you are more beholding to the goodneſs of Fortune, than to your own prudent Caution in looking out Men of honeſt Report, and ſufficient for theſe Things. I have read a great Number of Books written by all Parties, and I declare without Partiality, that I cannot find ſuch Clearneſs and Strength of Reaſoning, ſuch profound Apologies for our

holy

holy Faith from any, as from the conformable Clergy. Let the Multitude of Volumes which they have publiſhed, clear them from ſuch a baſe Cenſure. Indeed did Edification conſiſt in a mournful Tone, in a ſad Countenance, in beating the Breaſt, in extended Arms, or in peculiar and affected Phraſes, there might be ſome Truth in your Pretenſions. Things of this Nature may go very far to captivate the Affections of the more unthinking Part of the World; and they that are moſt skilful at them, may have the Applauſe and Hums of the Illiterate, who do not at all underſtand what Improvement, and what Edification means, as to Neceſſary and Divine Truths.

Scott. You ſurprize me with your Novel Opinion, ay that you do; for ſeveral Perſons flock to our Meetings only out of a ſincere Deſire of being better inſtructed with us, than they can be from your Pulpits.

Cint. I know that is an Objection that is frequently in your Mouths; but what Reaſon can be aſſigned for it? for in common Converſation the Conformiſts ſeem to have as good natural and acquired Parts as any of your Miniſters: and if any Divine, Moral, or Philoſophical Subject happens to be ſtarted, I aſſure you, they do handle it as handſomly, and as judiciouſly, (to ſpeak modeſtly) as any of thoſe whom you ſo much extol. The Epiſcopal Divines are as well, if not better furniſhed with Books than the Diſciplinarians. Our Miniſters have lived in the Schools of the Prophets (I mean in Univerſities) many Years; yours only in a private School, or it may be from a Trade to the Pulpit. Our Miniſters have had the Advantage of hearing many excellent Diſcourſes preached upon all Subjects before the Univerſities, and very judicious Lectures in Divinity read in their publick Schools, and in their private Chappels. Who are better qualified do you think to edifie Men?

Scott. You offer very fair Things towards my Conviction as

as to this particular Point; though after all, our Men are generally thought to be the beſt Preachers and Expounders of God's Word.

Cant. Offer me nothing without a Reaſon; do not think to impoſe upon me with your empty Phraſes of gifted Men, and profound Divines; Mens Education, and publick Performances in Print ſhall weigh more with me I will aſſure you: I remember that juſt now you were very hard upon our Miniſters for not warping a little more to the Humours of the preſent Age; you charged upon them too much Stiffneſs and Reſolution to keep Things in *Statu-quo*. But it frequently happens, that ſome Men are blamed for their Honeſty and Conſtancy to defend a good Cauſe: Take it as you pleaſe, I would ſooner ſubmit to the Judgment of our preſent King, than to yours. And I ſhall give you his Opinion in his own Words, in his late Injunctions; *We being ſenſible,* (ſaith he) *that nothing can more effectually conduce to the Honour and Glory of God, and the Support of the Proteſtant Religion, than the protecting and maintaining the Church of* England *as by Law eſtabliſhed, which we are reſolved to do, to the utmoſt of our Power.* Mark that, will you? what, would you have our Miniſters oppoſe the Judgment of our King, and contradict their own repeated Declarations for the Excellency of our Church, when nothing but the Clamours of our Enemies, who gape after her Revenues, can pretend to blemiſh her? indeed, were the Terms required by our Church immoderate in themſelves, I ſhould be the firſt Man that ſhould plead for Forbearance and Relaxation, and if that was the preſent Caſe, to maintain the Church as by Law eſtabliſhed, would be a troubleſome, and a culpable Zeal in the Clergy. But let Men wrangle to Eternity, they will never be able to prove to the Satisfaction of wiſe and indifferent Perſons, that the Church of *England* is guilty of this Charge. Believe me, Mr. *Scott*, the Moderation of our Church is very eminent and no-

notorious to all who underſtand her excellent Conſtitution. What ſober Stranger would not look about him, and ſtand amaz'd at the mighty Noiſe that is continually made about two or three Ceremonies, to which no manner of Holineſs in the World is attributed? Why ſhould Men take it ſo ill, that few harmleſs Laws are made for the Government of the Church? is Uniformity in it ſelf a Snare to Mens Conſciences? and why ſhould Men claim what Liberty they pleaſe as to Ceremonies and Church-Diſcipline, from their Superiours, and yet will heavily yoke their own Congregations with their own private Orders and Decrees, as if they were infallible, or were perfect Lords over other mens Conſciences?

Scott. What would you have upright Chriſtians do? would you have them conform againſt their Conſciences?

Cant. I will tell them what I would have them do. Let them in the Name of God endeavour to inform their Judgments, and underſtand better the Nature of Sin, which is a Tranſgreſſion of a Law. Think upon this Apoſtolical Definition, and defend your ſelves if you can. For what command of God is directly, or by Conſequence violated by your exact Conformity to the Laws of our Church?

Scott. I love to be free with you; I have nothing at preſent that I can think upon to weaken your Argument: however, I will be ſure to carry it along with me to my Godly and Learned Paſtour, who can effectually anſwer it, I am confident.

Cant. Do it withal my Heart: But, dear Neighbour, I expect a round and a plain Anſwer from him; and let me tell you, If your Paſtour goes about to reſolve my Argument in long and dark Speeches, he is certainly puzzled, and cannot well maintain his own Cauſe.

Scott. I am very well ſatisfied of his great Abilities and Moderation. I wiſh that all others were indued with the ſame Healing Diſpoſition

Cant. Moderation is a mighty Word with you I find; certainly you muſt needs dream about it at Nights, ſo great is your Love for it: I believe there is as much commendable Moderation to be ſeen in the Deportment of our Miniſters, as in the Non-Conformiſts. And before I leave you, I hope to bring you to the ſame Judgment with my ſelf. Pray is it not common at the general Meetings of your Clergy, to have an Aſſociation, or ſomething of that Nature, handed about?

Scott. I cannot underſtand where your Queſtion drives; certainly the Merit of the Cauſe cannot at all be concerned in giving you Satisfaction in this Matter.

Cant. However, oblige for once an old Acquaintance; and though my Queſtion ſeems to be improper; Friendſhip, I am ſatisfied, does ſtudy rather to pleaſe, and oblige, than to be profound, and critically exact in common Converſation.

Scott. Then I will tell you, That I believe it is no unuſual Thing to have an Aſſociation promoted at ſuch Meetings. I have been at ſome my ſelf, where ſuch a Thing has happened, and what Hurt can be in it I pray? for it is only a friendly League, and a Chriſtian Reſolution to ſtand by one another, and to do our Endeavour to promote the Glory of God, and to eſtabliſh his Truth in the World.

Cant. A Reſolution to ſtand by one another! Are you apprehenſive of a Maſſacre from us? no Body moleſts you that I know of: you ſhould have added (which is indeed the real Meaning) that we ſolemnly proteſt and reſolve never to be Quiet, until our Religion is made the National, and Parliamentary Religion: your Miniſters, it ſeems, ſhall enter into ſolemn Leagues and Covenants to deſtroy our eſtabliſhed Church, and ſhall ſtill be ſtiled the Moderate, the Healing Men of the Nation. But if our Divines ſtand up in Defence of our excellent Liturgy, and a few ancient Ceremonies, preſently they will be branded with all the ill Characters that a malicious Age can invent. O the Partiality of the World!

World! O what an Age is this that we live in! that none ſhall be reputed Virtuous, but ſuch *who are given to Change*; that none ſhall be accounted Lovers of their Country, Lovers of their King, but who are notorious Depravers of the Common Prayer Book, and very Inclinable to part with *Dioceſan* Epiſcopacy! But it may be (Mr. *Scott*) by eſtabliſhing Gods Truth in the World, you mean to take a long Voyage to convert ſome dark Corner of the World to Chriſtianity: if that is your only Meaning and Deſign, the Lord proſper you.

Scott. What, you are reſolved to banter and expoſe us, are you? you are a merry ſort of Man truly; who talks of taking long Voyages (your ſelf only excepted?) we love *England* too well to part with it upon ſuch Uncertainties.

Cant. But what can that Expreſſion of eſtabliſhing Gods Truth in the World mean, if you are not for the *Indies*, or ſome foreign Plantation to preach our Saviours Religion? at this rate I ſhall never underſtand my Mothers Tongue: has not *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, or ſome other Apoſtolical Man prevented you from that great Honour of being the firſt Publiſhers of Chriſtianity in this Iſland? or are the Primitive Faith, and our National Religion two different Things? I thought that the Presbyterians did *ex animo* ſubſcribe to the Doctrinal Articles (as they call them) of our Church. I am confident that the Confeſſions of the Reformed Churches abroad, agree in moſt Things with ours.

Scott. You have run into many Words to little purpoſe. We do not deny that there is Chriſtianity in *England*; we are only for a purer Reformation, and juſtly Zealous to have Things reduced to their primitive Model. Epiſcopacy (as it is eſtabliſhed here in *England*) is an intolerable Burden, and certainly it can be no Fault in us to endeavour in a Legal Way, to eaſe our ſelves of the Miſchiefs it continually expoſes us to. Did our Parliament take their Meaſures from *Scot-*

land, I believe *England* would be the Glory of the whole Earth: our Heats and Animosities would be totally at an end; Trade would flourish; good Manners and sincere Piety would abound in the Land; in short, the *Millenium* would quickly commence.

Cant. Brave Times indeed. Alas! what Unhappiness this is, that our Representatives in the Lower House have not all this Time thought on Ways and Means to make us a most happy People? it is great Pity (methinks) that some considerable Men do not warmly address the Committee of Religion in this Matter.

Scott. 'Tis to no purpose I am fully perswaded; for the Members of the House of Commons are Episcopally inclined, and after an exact Enquiry, I cannot find that one Man of them made a Speech against Deans and Chapters (a good Introduction you know that would have been) but not a Word of this Nature has been offered in the House. When Taxes are such mortifying Things to the Subjects, the Sale of their Estates would have gratified and obliged the Mob; and our Party would thereby be strengthned. I would have them also make some better Provisions, with some Part of that Money, for poor Vicarages.

Cant. A notable Way indeed, to make Proselytes with sacrilegious Presents: What, would you rob *Peter* (to use the old Proverb) to pay *Paul*? what is all the tenderness of your Conscience come to this at last? at this Rate your loud Zeal for a purer Reformation, was but a long Cloak to hide your Covetousness; truly now you have sufficiently discovered your self. But to your great Comfort (be as zealous as you will at Parliamentary Elections to have Men chosen of your Kidney) you will never compass your ill Designs in this Reign. Our gracious King is Master of more Honour, Policy, and Religion, than to destroy the ancient Constitutions of our Church. Has not he frequently exposed his sacred Person on

Sea

Sea and Land, only to maintain the Proteſtant Religion, the Liberties and Properties of his People, whether Eccleſiaſtical or Civil? we have great Reaſons to rely upon his Promiſes which he has frequently made to maintain the Church as it is eſtabliſhed amongſt us. Therefore pray be not uneaſie at the Encouragement that has been charitably given by our Anceſtors; and legally ſettled to maintain the Ambaſſadours of Chriſt, and to ſupport the Honour and Reputation of the Clergy. Shall the Reverend and Learned Judges of the Law have eminent Reſpect? ſhall they be certain of great Sallaries? and ſhall thoſe of the Sacred Profeſſion, Men of the greateſt Learning (and we hope many of them) of ſingular Piety, be treated at a very low mean rate? why ſhould they be debarr'd of Temporal Dignity, and why ſhould they be only on a Level with the meaner ſort of People?

Scott. I ſee you can give a Colour to a Cauſe: but after all, a great Maintenance makes them Proud, Lazy, and Domineering.

Cant. And I am perſwaded that a mean Condition, which you would put them in, is more likely to make them Ignorant, Sneaking, and Contemptible, and to force them out of their Studies to follow ſome diſhonourable Employment. A ſtrait Fortune is a great Temptation to diſtract their Minds, (which for the Good of others ought to be kept in a very good Temper) and to corrupt their Morals.

Scott. Suppoſe I ſhould grant you all this, and much more, and that from a large Encouragement they are capable of doing eminent Acts of Charity, and thereby to gain the Affections of their Hearers; are we obliged to keep up another ſort of Government in the Church, far different from that which our Saviour did appoint? muſt the Divine Equality of Church-men be laid aſide, and Superiority (the Invention of Men) be put in its room?

Cant.

Cant. I perfectly understand you: Episcopacy (as held here) has been so clearly made out, and defended by Learned Men of our own Nation, that I wonder how it can be a Controversie any longer among us. 'Tis most certain, That the Apostles were of a higher Order in the Church than the Seventy, who had full Power given them by our Saviour to Preach the Gospel; and yet the Apostles advanced *Matthias* (one of the Seventy) to the Honour of an Apostleship, into the Room of *Judas* that fell. And how this Superiority should cease without a Divine Repeal, is a Thing not easily to be accounted for; it is certain that the Apostles had the Care of many Churches; as it is very evident from 2 *Cor.* 11. 28. *Besides those things which are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches.* And as the Apostles withdrew, so Bishops came in their Room to govern the Church, and to ordain Presbyters in every City, *Tit.* 1. 5. If *Timothy* was no more than a common Presbyter, with what Propriety of Speech can it be said, that he had Authority and Jurisdiction over other Presbyters; to receive Accusations, examine Witnesses, and pass Censures upon them? if People were of a peaceable Disposition, they would never disturb the Peace of the Church without evident Proofs that they were in the right, which I am certain they have not: I will give them the Sense and Practise of the Church in the Words of St. *Jerom* in his Epistle to *Euagrius*, *Nam, & Alexandriæ a Marco Evangelista usque ad Heraclam & Dionysium Episcopos, Presbyteri semper unum ex se electum in excelsiori gradu collocatum Episcopum nominabant* Let their great Advocate (I say) St. *Jerom* (whom they frequently quote upon this Occasion) decide the Controversie. If a Bishop and a Presbyter do not differ, what means this *excelsior gradus*, this higher Degree? and was this Superiority practiced at *Alexandria* from *Mark* the Evangelist; how can it then be a Thing of so late Invention, as is pretended by our Adversaries?

ries? But ſuppoſe this Superiority be not of Divine Inſtitution, as certainly it is; pray wherein is a Lay-man concerned? or his Salvation endangered by it? muſt he quit the Church, becauſe his Miniſter was ordained by a Biſhop, and yet not without the Aſſiſtance of Three or Four grave Presbyters? can't the Prayers of the Biſhop be as effectual at the Confirmation of my Child, as the Prayers of a private Miniſter? or can't my Child as well acknowledge the Obligation of his Baptiſmal Vow to the Biſhop, as to a Superintendent, or a Moderator of a Claſs? What can a Lay man pretend to in this Matter? or how can he be grieved by Dioceſan Epiſcopacy? I muſt declare ingenuouſly for my Part, I wonder how any Miniſter can Scruple the Oath of Canonical Obedience to his Dioceſan *in omnibus licitis & honeſtis*, as long as the Law of the Land requires it: for that Man is my Superiour, (and by a ſort of Divine Right too) who is made ſo by my King according to Law, if ſuch a Superiority does not evidently contradict ſome Command of God. I ſhall give you the Judgment and Advice of the old and pious Mr. *Dod*, as I find it in his own Life, quoted out of Mr. *Fuller*. *He uſed* (ſays my Author) *to retrench ſome hot Spirits, when inveighing againſt Biſhops, telling them how God under that Government had given a marvellous Increaſe to the Goſpel, and that godly Men might comfortably comport therewith, under which, Learning and Religion had ſo manifeſt an Improvement.*

Scott. But the Caſe is different now. We may ſeparate from them by Law: we have Liberty, and ſhall we not uſe it?

Cant. Indeed your Toleration does free you from the Penalty of the Law; but can never exempt you from your Obedience to thoſe who have the Rule over you. You ought in Conſcience to keep the Unity of the Church as far as in you lies; and to go as far as poſſible, to make up our unhappy Breaches, which obſtruct and hinder the Progreſs of the Goſpel. When the Heathens made this Obſervation upon the

the Behaviour and Deportment of the Primitive Chriſtians, *See how the Chriſtians love one another*! then it was that Religion got Ground, and the Power of Satan decreaſed. But as long as men take a quite different Courſe, and do not ſtrive to worſhip God with one Heart, and with one Mouth, Things will never go well in the Church, Piety will be almoſt extinguiſht out of the World; Profaneſs will ſpread it ſelf Far and Wide, and ſcarcely will the Son of Righteouſneſs find Faith upon Earth, when he comes to Judge the World, if our Diviſions go on, and Altar ſet up againſt Altar.

Scott. Tis a great Unhappineſs, that we are under a Neceſſity to divide from the Church by reaſon of its Corruptions.

Cant. What, under a Neceſſity, when even your voluntary Subſcriptions are ſuch good Teſtimonies againſt you? if that is Neceſſity, upon my Word tis a very odd one. I have heard ſome of your Party boaſt very much, that they are greater Sticklers for the abovementioned Articles than the Conformable Clergy: why ſhould you therefore talk of a Neceſſity? tis certain that Corruption only in Doctrine can warrant a Separation.

Scott. What is that, let me hear it over again? will not perſonal, and moral Faults juſtifie a Separation?

Cant. Not at all; and I will give you my Reaſon for it in few Words. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were ſo corrupt in their Morals, and ſo deſperately Wicked, that our Saviour frequently denounced a Wo againſt them. The *Temple* the *Houſe of Prayer*, was become *a Den of Thieves*. And Things of humane Invention were introduced by them into the Worſhip of God: but notwithſtanding all this, the meek Jeſus held conſtant Communion with the Jews in the publick Exerciſe of their Religion; how frequently do we hear of him at the Temple and Synagogues? St. *Luke* is very plain in the Matter, when he ſays that *(As his cuſtom was) he went to the Synagogue*

on

on the Sabbath-day, and ſtood up for to read; not to croſs the Orders and Conſtitutions of the Aſſemblies, but to joyn with them in the Worſhip of God, in a peaceable and divine Manner. Chriſt was ready on all Occaſions to comply with his Country-men in Things indifferent, *leſt we give them Offence*, to uſe his own Phraſe; yea, he was ſuch an exact Conformiſt, that he would by no means have his extraordinary Cures damnifie the Prieſts in their cuſtomary Dues. *Matth.* 8. 4. And to give you the Words of Dr. *Lightfoot*, a Perſon of great Moderation; *Chriſt's own Precept ſpeaks not only his own Practice, but even his own Mind and Senſe*, and he would never go contrary to that, to which he exhorted others. *Matth.* 23. 1 *The Scribes and Phariſees ſit in* Moſes's *chair*; they are the chief Magiſtrates, and ſit in the Legiſlative-Chair, *therefore whatſoever they command you, in things not ſinful, do.*

Scott. I ſhall ſeriouſly conſider of this our friendly Debate. I am very well pleaſed with this ſhort Conference we have had.

Cant. I am glad that we can part ſo well, and that we have not broke out into extravagant Paſſion. I am very confident, that none ought to leave the Church, either for perſonal Miſcarriages, or for things which ſeem inconvenient. And let me adviſe you to imitate Chriſt Jeſus the beſt Pattern of Love and Communion.

Scott. I ſhall endeavour to tread in his Steps.

Cant. If you are going, farewel, and the Lord preſerve you, and every honeſt Man in the Communion of the Church. I hope to ſee you next *Sunday* in our Pariſh-Church.

Scott. I believe you may, dear Neighbour.

A LETTER to a FRIEND by Way of a POSTSCRIPT.

Dear SIR,

I Am extreamly ſorry for the Account I lately received from you, of your Inclinations and Deſigns to leave our Church, unleſs I could give a full and á clear Anſwer to your Objections, which you conceive to be ſtrong; did I indeed bear to you the Relation of a lawful Miniſter, and under that Notion did Peremptorily decline your Propoſal, you might have a ſort of Pretence to juſtifie your Separation. But in my Opinion, you expreſs your ſelf very odly and raſhly, in ſaying you will forſake the Church of *England*, unleſs a private and an ordinary Man can, and is diſpoſed to confute your Objections which are groundleſs. All Men have not Leiſure and Temper to diſpute; nor does their Genius lead them that Way: you are greatly miſtaken if you think that the Goodneſs of our Cauſe does depend upon the Ability of one or two Miniſters. Repair

to our eminent Biſhops and Doctors; or if you like not this Advice, peruſe Seriouſly, and judge Impartially their admirable Writings, before you condemn our ancient Conſtitution, before you leave our Parochial Churches. Our Pariſh Miniſters have better Things to mind, than the Reputation of being quick Diſputants about Ceremonies. They have enough to do to Compoſe Weekly Sermons, to Catechize the Youth, to Viſit the Sick, to make up Differences among their Neighbours, and to Adminiſter the Bleſſed Sacraments.

But however, to ſay ſomething to your Scruples, which will (it may be) draw you to a dangerous Schiſm, I ſhall take Notice of your firſt Objection frequently made by others, and as frequently anſwered, *About the Sign of the Croſs in Baptiſm.* Did I believe you would be at the Pains to read other Learned Pieces, which have largely treated about that ancient Ceremony, I would only refer you to them; and I am certain, my Performance will be far ſhort of theirs: It is very evident, that the Primitive Chriſtians upon all Solemn Occaſions, were wont *Frontem Signaculo terere*, to make a Sign of the Croſs upon their Foreheads; not that they did this by Vertue of any Divine Precept, but to intimate by this laudable Cuſtom, and decent Ceremony, that they were not aſhamed

med of the Croſs of Chriſt, and a Crucified Saviour. They did triumph and glory in the Symbolical Remembrance of their Maſters Death. And this Ceremony was conſtantly obſerved in the time of St. *Baſil*, *Tertullian*, and St. *Cyprian*, who all lived before Popery was ever heard of in the World, ſo that the Uſe of it, as it is now among us, has not the leaſt Colour of a Papiſtical Innovation. And truly thoſe Men who call it Superſtition and Popery, do greatly impoſe upon, and abuſe the more ignorant part of the World. When do our Miniſters breathe Croſs-ways? when do they pretend, as the *Romaniſts* do, to convey by it to the Child any Spiritual Grace? we acknowledge and confeſs the Baptiſm full and perfect, before the Ceremony of the Croſs is obſerved; and the Form of Private Baptiſm, where no mention of the Croſs is made, puts the matter, one would think, out of all Diſpute. The Infant is not conſcious of what is done upon his Forehead, and if he was, the Sign can be no Crime in him, no Sin in his Parents, for permitting the Miniſter to diſcharge his Duty as the Rubrick preſcribes; unleſs they can prove that to obey thoſe that have the Rule over us in indifferent things, is a thing really ſinful. And to give you my Judgment about the much deſired Alterations in the Church; take the Words of the excellent

Bish. *Bramh.* to M. *Militier.*

cellent Bishop *Bramhal*; *Needless Alteration does* (saith that great Man) *diminish the venerable Esteem of Religion, and lessen the Credit of ancient Truths.* Break Ice in one Place, and it will crack in more. But you seem to be much more concern'd for your Second Objection, which was, *That by continuing a Member of our Church, you did for ever put your self out of all Capacity to make Choice of your Spiritual Guide*; which you think is a thing contrary to all the Reason in the World. But, Sir, your thinking so, does not determine the matter one way or other; you are not Patron of your own, nor any Parish Church, and it may be, that is the only Reason that you so warmly plead for the popular Election of our Ministers. For every one (as far as I can observe) is for having the Parson a Creature of his own making. But did your Method become once National, I believe we should have just Cause to dislike it after a Time; we are apt to overvalue Things at a Distance, before we come to a full View of them, and understand their intrinsick Worth by daily and familiar Experience. What Heats and Animosities, what Disorders and Scandals might this sort of Polling create? The Judicious, Wise, and Virtuous are the Major Part, but in few Parishes; and could you be contented to have your Minister

ſter choſen and admitted by the Illiterate, Profane, and Sottiſh Part of Man-kind? To ſay that you are for a Sett of few excellent Electors (your ſelf always preſumed to be one of them) is to throw off your own Principle, which inſiſted on the Duty and Reaſonableneſs of every Man to make Choice of his own Spiritual Phyſician, if ſome few, inſtead of all in the Pariſh, ſhall only vote at the Election of Miniſters; Tradeſmen, Graſiers, and Plowmen, (I mean no manner of Reflection on their natural Endowments) are not competent Judges of Learning, and exact Diſcourſes. St. *Paul*, for ſome natural Impediment in his Speech, would ſcarcely ever be promoted to the Divinity-Chair, if he lived now upon Earth, and depended upon the Voices of the unthinking Mob, or conceited Mechanicks. What, will you leave the Church, becauſe the Right of Patronage is not quite alter'd; becauſe Biſhops and Gentlemen will not part with their legal Priviledges and Eſtates? The Dioceſan is a ſufficient Judge of the Qualifications of Miniſters; and in all Probability, you will be better provided with one that can divide the Word of Truth aright, and *give to every one their portion in due ſeaſon*, from Patrons according to the Law now in force, than can be well expected from any new Models and Schemes recommended to the World by our new Reformers;

ments; you may call it Conſcience, or what you will; but I look upon it as an Argument of a very rebellious Temper, to be always finding Fault with Laws and Canons, old and innocent Cuſtoms. To be ſhort with you, I think I have ſufficiently expoſed the Vanity of your Pretences in this, and the foregoing Dialogue, and let me tell you; (whatever you think) to make a Separation from a National Church that is truly Apoſtolical, and is as free from Error as any Church in the whole World, is no leſs than *rending and dividing the Body of Chriſt.* The Sin cannot well be aggravated, as introducing into the World Atheiſm and Irreligion, Strifes and Envyings, Malice and Bitterneſs. In ſhort, think upon God's terrible Threats againſt Diviſions and Separations; view the Orders of our Church, without Partiality, and without Prejudice, view her Sacraments, and her Worſhip, bring them to the Scriptures; and then I queſtion not but it will appear your Intereſt and Duty, to promote the Unity of our Church as by Law eſtabliſhed, againſt all the good Words, and fair Speeches of thoſe who deceive the Hearts of the Simple.

I am, Dear SIR,

June 14. 1698.

your Friend to ſerve you.